



ASSOCIATION OF  
PUBLIC &  
LAND-GRANT  
UNIVERSITIES

## FY 2026 APPROPRIATIONS PRIORITIES

STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS/ NATIONAL SECURITY, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND RELATED PROGRAMS

### PRELIMINARY REQUEST

AGENCY	ACCOUNT	APLU FY2026 REQUEST
Agency for International Development (USAID)	Higher Education	\$350 million
	Feed the Future Innovation Labs	\$88 million
Department of State	Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program	\$20 million

## AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)

### USAID HIGHER EDUCATION

APLU FY2026 REQUEST: \$350 MILLION

FY2026 PBR = TBD; FY2025 = TBD; FY2024 = \$271 MILLION

APLU requests \$350 million in FY26 for the [USAID Higher Education account](#) to advance U.S. interests through increased strategic international exchanges, development of innovation networks that create new opportunities and markets for U.S. industry, and leadership development capabilities to support short and long-term security interests.

Agency reorganizations affecting USAID and the Department of State have created uncertainty around the status of programs within the higher education account. APLU looks forward to working with Congress and the administration to ensure the continued success and investment in Higher Education programs that further the nation's economic, diplomatic, and security interests.

More prosperous countries with educated populations are trading partners for the United States. USAID Higher Education partnerships are vital to raising the prosperity of key U.S. partner nations, position the U.S. favorably with the next generation of leadership abroad, and effectuate a key component of U.S. soft power. Public universities are key partners in these strategies and are uniquely positioned to help solve some of the most pressing development challenges. As examples, higher education institutions (HEIs) can: 1) build workforce capacity; 2) enhance research and development; 3) strengthen international institutions. These capabilities are realized through USAID higher education programs, pairing U.S. and global HEIs with key stakeholders, to develop local, regional, and national economies.

USAID Higher Education programs support training across many disciplines, in 2020 alone more than 136,00 participants engaged in long-term degree-related training outside the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Globally, USAID higher education programs, in partnership with U.S. HE institutions, trained more than one million people in 2020. Strong economies that have a distributed workforce allow for greater global security because there are opportunities within each country to make a living in a stable environment. A study of four years of these programs demonstrated that HEI programs<sup>2</sup>:

- Optimized professional development for medical practitioners and technicians, reducing mortality and limiting virus transmission.
- Enhanced international science policy.
- Improved global civil law systems.
- Advanced international science methods, equipment maintenance, data collection, grant writing, financial management, and academic leadership.
- Fostered partnerships between U.S. and global institutions that built competitive workforces which contributed to science-based solutions to human health challenges.

Developing countries are important and growing markets for U.S. exports. USAID HE initiatives put the U.S. in a position to build strategic alliances and serve as an anchor for U.S. soft power and diplomacy at a time when competitors seek to advance their own capabilities.<sup>3</sup>

## FEED THE FUTURE INNOVATION LABS

### APLU FY2026 REQUEST: \$88 MILLION

### FY2026 PBR = TBD; FY2025 = TBD; FY2024 = \$72 MILLION

APLU requests \$88 million for the Feed the Future Innovation Labs (ILs) in FY26 to support international research partnerships for global food supply and security needs. Currently, 17 ILs are led by 13 U.S. universities in partnership with U.S. colleges and universities in 15 additional states and Puerto Rico.

Agency reorganizations affecting USAID and the Department of State have created uncertainty around the status of this program. APLU looks forward to working with Congress and the administration to ensure the continued success and investment in Feed the Future Innovation Labs, which have for many years contributed immensely to U.S. economic, diplomatic, and security interests.

The FTFILs leverage the advanced capacities of U.S. universities to derive wide-ranging benefits to U.S. and global agriculture. Research at the FTFILs drive progress on critical agronomic, livestock, food system, and economic areas needed to advance food security globally, and to ensure U.S. agriculture remains strategically positioned in an evolving global food supply chain. As the agricultural systems in developing countries become more sophisticated—progress aided by the research at the Innovation Labs—those countries’ demand for U.S. goods and services grows. The Innovation Labs are engines of domestic and global development, principally via:

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY20\\_Title\\_XII\\_Report\\_to\\_Congress.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY20_Title_XII_Report_to_Congress.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/HELA%20Final%20Report\\_Sept19.pdf](https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/HELA%20Final%20Report_Sept19.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7102532/>

- Innovation Labs’ work directly supports foreign market development for U.S. commodity and agricultural input companies.
- The lab’s research directly advances global food security through domestic investment, which supports scientists at U.S. research universities, primarily land-grant institutions.
- Investments in agriculture development through Feed the Future Innovation Lab university partnerships have delivered an 8-to-1 return on investment for the U.S. taxpayer.<sup>4</sup>

Across the 17 FTFILs, research topics are varied and include: key U.S. commodity crops, such as staple grains, legumes, soybeans, peanuts, fruits, and vegetables; improvements to efficient management of crop, water and soils; irrigation and mechanization; current and emerging threats especially to U.S. crops; agricultural insurance; animal health, including vaccine delivery; livestock and aquatic systems; issues of agricultural and food security policy; food safety; investment and policy for dynamic food system transformation; and nutrition.

As examples, researchers at the ILs have:

- Identified strategies to increase the number of farms that have risk protection/insurance.
- Designed post-harvest storage bags that kill detrimental insects, bought by three million farmers in 58 countries.
- Generated climate-resilient, nutritious varieties of sorghum, millets, root, and tuber crops for cropping systems in Haiti, Senegal, Uganda, and Malawi.

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

### BENJAMIN A. GILMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

APLU FY2026 REQUEST: \$20 MILLION

FY2026 PBR = TBD; FY2025 = TBD; FY2024 = \$17 MILLION

APLU requests \$20 million for the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program in FY26 to provide Pell-recipient students with financial resources for critical academic experiences abroad.

Study abroad programs further U.S. economic security by fostering global competitiveness, sustaining an informed civic culture, and providing students with the critical skills and experience needed to succeed in an increasingly globalized society. The Gilman Scholarship Program promotes access to study abroad programs, ensuring a broad pool of globally competent graduates enter the workforce.

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<sup>4</sup> Dalton, Timothy J., and Keith Fuglie. "Costs, benefits, and welfare implications of USAID investment in agricultural research through US universities." *Journal of agricultural and applied economics* 54, no. 3 (2022): 461-479.

Agency reorganizations affecting the Department of State have created uncertainty around the status of this program. APLU looks forward to working with Congress and the administration to ensure its continued success and investment in international scholarship programs.